



Dateline ERS

New ERS research and analysis at: www.ers.usda.gov

Economic Research Service

March 2005

U.S. Department of Agriculture

ERS is the main source of research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.

New on the Web Global Food Markets Briefing Room

As incomes have risen in many countries during the past few decades, consumers have begun purchasing fewer staples (like rice and wheat) and more high-value food items (such as meat, dairy, pasta, and frozen vegetables). Global sales of high-value products have been growing, with sales increasing by a quarter since 1998. Food suppliers have responded to this expanding consumer demand by importing high-value foods from around the world. Moreover, food manufacturers have invested in processing facilities in many host countries.

[www.ers.usda.gov/
briefing/globalfoodmarkets](http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/globalfoodmarkets)

Commodity Markets and Trade

ERS Outlook reports provide timely analysis of major commodity markets and trade, including special reports on hot topics. All reports, along with a calendar of future releases, are available at: [www.ers.usda.gov/
publications/outlook](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook)

Farm Households Receive Most of Their Income Off the Farm

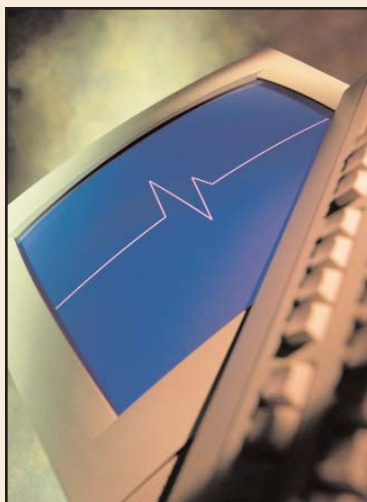
www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib797

Average farm household income has been at or above the national average in recent years, with farm households receiving most of their income from off-farm sources. *Structural and Financial Characteristics of U.S. Farms: 2004 Family Farm Report* presents comprehensive information on family and nonfamily farms and important trends in farming, operator household income, farm performance, and contracting. Over the past 40 years, the growth in contract-governed production has been slow and steady, and now covers well over two-thirds of the value of U.S. production.

Large family farms are often organized as family corporations. They account for a small share of farms but represent a large and growing share of farm sales. Small family farms account for most U.S. farms but produce a modest share of farm output. Most farms are family farms, or farm operations organized as proprietorships, partnerships, or family corporations.



Redesigned Webpages Provide Easier Navigation



Data Portal Page www.ers.usda.gov/data

The redesigned data portal page provides a more convenient gateway to a wealth of data. A new classification system lets you search by commodity, geographic area, and topic — with all choices on one page. Featured and most requested data products, recent updates, key indicators and the current month's calendar have been moved to the top of the page for easier access. In addition, data products are now listed on the page alphabetically by topic for quicker selection.

Newsroom www.ers.usda.gov/news

The ERS Newsroom has undergone further adjustments to better serve the media and make things faster and easier to find. It includes two new sections at the top of the page — **in-brief** includes concise summaries of our research and analysis, and **data you can use** showcases our most popular data products. There are also more links under the **media shortcuts** section that link directly to timely topics like soybean rust, farm programs, and trends in the cattle/beef industry. In addition, more new products are now featured on the front page.



Conference Policy and Competitiveness in a Changing Global Food Industry

www.ers.usda.gov/features/policyconference

The global food industry is constantly evolving, driven not only by changes in consumer preferences, but also by technology, new links forged between members of food supply chains, and prevailing government policies and business environments.

On **Thursday, April 28**, ERS and co-sponsors Farm Foundation, Pennsylvania State University, and International Food and Agribusiness Management Association are sponsoring a one-day conference in Washington, D.C. that will address policy and competitiveness issues facing the global food economy in an age marked by constant change. Some specific issues addressed will include:

- **Firm competitiveness:** What does being competitive in a global market mean to individual food firms? Do firm perspectives vary based on size, product focus, or country of origin?
- **Trade:** How do evolving global food supply chains influence food trade flows? Does a globalized food industry promote growth or fragmentation of food trade?
- **Policy:** Do national food policies have a role in an increasingly global industry? Do supply chain trends disadvantage smaller firms and lead to greater concentration?

For more information, or to register, go to:
www.ers.usda.gov/features/policyconference



Regional Modeling System for Costs of Manure Management

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/tb1913

As part of a broader ERS assessment of the costs of manure management, a regional modeling framework was developed to evaluate the effect of Federal guidelines for farmland application of manure on the costs of hauling and spreading manure. *Technical Documentation of the Regional Manure Management Model for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* presents technical details of the regional modeling system, applied to the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The report includes an overview of the model's scope and structure, data sources, and modeling assumptions.

How to get more information . . .

More information about the items featured in Dateline **ERS** can be found at our Website: www.ers.usda.gov by typing in the listed address. This newsletter is also available online at www.ers.usda.gov/news